

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated February 3, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response extended two months and set to expire on July 6, 2004. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1, 4-14, 16-24, and 26-34 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 4-7, 10-14, 20-24, 28-29, and 31-33 stand rejected. Claims 8-9, 16-19, 26-27, 30 and 34 stand objected to by the Examiner. Please cancel claims 1, 4-14, 16-24, and 26-34 without prejudice. Please enter new claims 41-56. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of cancelled claims 1, 4-14, 16-24, and 26-34 in a continuation application. Cancellation of claims 1, 4-14, 16-24, and 26-34, is not a concession that the claims are not patentable, but rather reflects Applicants' decision to pursue the subject matter of claims 41-56. Applicants request consideration of the new claims for the reasons discussed below.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner stated that claims 8-9, 16-19, 26-27, 30 and 34 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claims 41-50 represent claims 8-9, 16-19, 26-27, 30 and 34 in independent form, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 41-50.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1 and 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Gabe et al.* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0102226 A1).

Claims 11 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Gabe et al.*

Claims 20-24 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Gabe et al.*

Claims 7 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Gabe et al.* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0102226 A1) as applied to claims 1 and 4-6 above.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Gabe et al.*

Claims 29, 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Naoi et al.* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0059634).

Claim 33 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Naoi et al.*

Applicants have canceled claims 1, 4-14, 16-24, and 26-34 without prejudice and present new claims 51-56 for consideration by the Examiner. It is believed that new claims 51-56 are supported by the specification and drawings and do not add new matter. Applicants assert that, as evidenced by the previously filed declaration of an inventor of the present Application (Exhibit A), claims 51-56 are fully supported by the declaration, since Applicants' Declaration discloses anti-oxidants added to plating solutions in the presence of additives in order to reduce degradation of the additives. The declaration indicates that the invention was conceived prior to the relevant reference date of *Gabe et al.*, filed on October 2, 2001. All dates in Exhibit A prior to the relevant reference date have been masked. The declaration places the claims in condition for allowance. Allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Having addressed all issues set out in the Final Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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